

TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

The Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities and adult education programs receiving federal funding must comply. GED Testing Service® (GEDTS) requires all testing centers to comply with the ADA. Instructional and testing accommodations are part of compliance. Accommodations “level the playing field”. That is, were it not for the disability, the test-taker would be able to demonstrate the knowledge they have acquired. Accommodations are not designed to help the test-taker pass the test, but to remove a barrier.

Adult education providers may suspect a test-taker has a disability and will need testing accommodations through screening instruments, self-disclosure or lack of progress. When the provider suspects the presence of a disability, the documentation process should begin simultaneously with interventions.

The provider should begin using instructional strategies identified for the specific disability and adaptations that are allowed without documentation. These strategies and adaptations may subsequently be used as supporting documentation on the actual accommodation request.

The existence of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in the test-taker's record does not automatically mean the test-taker will be granted accommodations. It depends on whether the IEP contains a professional diagnostician's statement of the disability and the functional limitations resulting from the disability and/or whether required assessments were used.

There are four categories of disability and four accommodation request forms:

- physical/chronic health;
- emotional/mental health;
- attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder;
- learning and other cognitive disability.

The diagnostician's licensure number and expiration is required for all requests. For the first three forms, a letter from the diagnostician on official letterhead (no prescription pad notes) is required. The diagnostician must state the disability, the functional limitations and what accommodations are being requested. For learning and other cognitive disabilities, certain assessments are accepted to ascertain the presence or absence of the disability.

Adult Educator as Advocate

The adult educator may act as an advocate for the test-taker: that is, an advocate may take the report of the professional diagnostician and transfer information to the form; provide supporting documentation; and arrange assessments through Office of Vocational Rehabilitation or private practitioners.

Official Practice Test (OPT) Requirement

The OPT is an eligibility requirement. Test-takers requesting testing accommodations must demonstrate test readiness by passing the OPT. At least one content area of the OPT must be given with and without accommodation if the disability allows, thereafter, if the results indicate, the other content areas maybe given with accommodations. OPT scores must accompany the accommodation request and state whether or not accommodations were used.

The Process

The test-taker obtains the appropriate accommodation request form from the Chief Examiner at the GED Testing Center. This assures the examiner is aware that testing accommodations may need to be scheduled. The test-taker and/or advocate completes the form, the test-taker signs the form (or guardian if under age) and returns it to the test center with the professional diagnostician's documentation. The chief examiner reviews

the form for completeness including the presence of passing OPT scores. If the form is complete, the chief examiner signs the form and files with the GED Office in Frankfort.

The GED Office in Frankfort reviews the request and may return the request for more information, approve the request or send the request for expert review.

Common Mistakes

The most common deficiencies in an accommodation request can be corrected by carefully following the [Checklist for Completing Testing Accommodations Request](#) and ensuring the diagnostician is made aware of the required statements.

TESTING ADAPTATIONS AVAILABLE

The Chief Examiner may permit the use of the following adaptations and devices without prior approval from the GED Administrator, GEDTS, or GEDTS-trained and certified personnel. It is the Chief Examiner's prerogative to examine these materials to ensure that they do not contain any unauthorized testing aids.

Colored transparent overlays: These devices, which resemble tinted overhead transparencies, are widely used by persons with visual impairments and those with learning disabilities who have difficulty decoding written words and symbols.

Clear transparent overlays and highlighter: The combination of clear (un-tinted) overlays and a highlighter can be used for the test-taker who needs to use a highlighter while reading. The highlighting takes place on the clear overlay and protects the test booklet from becoming marked. All used overlays must be collected at the end of each testing session.

Temporary adhesive (e.g., Post-It Notes) with spatial directions: Test-takers can affix temporary "sticky" notes on the answer sheet to accommodate a disability affecting spatial orientation. For example, the test-taker might flag the sheet for top, bottom, right, and left.

Earplugs: The test-taker may use earplugs as an aid in concentration. Some large-volume or busy testing centers routinely distribute earplugs to all test-takers.

Large Print Tests: The test-taker may use the large print edition of the tests under normal time limits upon request to the Examiner. It is recommended that each GED Testing Center order at least one large print test battery per year for this purpose.

Magnifying Glass: The test-taker may use his or her preferred type of magnifying device during test taking. If the test-taker uses a magnifier during the standard testing session, the Examiner should take additional care to stagger test forms and must seat the test-taker in a way that precludes other test-takers from seeing his or her test materials.

One Test Per Day: Test-takers may take one test per day upon arrangement with the Chief Examiner at the designated testing center.

Straightedge: Test-takers may use a plain, unmarked straightedge made from any safe material as an aid in spatial orientation and reading. If the straightedge is an additional piece of scratch paper issued by the Examiner, it must be collected at the end of the testing session and destroyed with any other scratch paper.

Other Devices As Deemed Appropriate: GEDTS allows other devices without permission as long as they compensate for the disability and do not provide an unfair advantage.

(from *Ensuring Accommodations for GED Test-takers with Disabilities*, GEDTS)

ACCOMMODATIONS AVAILABLE FOR THE GED TESTS WITH DOCUMENTATION

For Candidates who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- Signed, captioned videotape of test instructions.
- Printed test instructions.
- Candidates may ask questions in writing to the Chief Examiner regarding all printed instructions and information.
- An interpreter to interpret instructions and administration information.
- For those test-takers who are deaf and hard of hearing or who use Standard Written English as a second language, extended time is an option.
- The candidate could use a videotape to compose the essay in rough draft, to be translated by the candidate into Standard Written English.

For Candidates who are Blind or Visually Impaired

- Nonstandard edition of the GED Tests – Braille, Audiocassette, Large Print.
- Many aids are permitted – talking calculators, visual adaptive devices, closed-circuit TV.
- For candidates who are unable to complete the standard answer sheet, they may use any Braille-writing device and a scribe.

For Candidates with Learning Disabilities or ADHD

- Dyslexia—extended time, audiocassette.
- Dysgraphia—extended time, scribe.
- Dyscalculia—extended time, calculator.
- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)—extended time, frequent breaks, private room.

These licensed diagnosticians may certify a candidate's disability.

Disability Type	Professional
Learning Disability	Psychologist, School Psychologists, Educational specialist with Advanced Training
Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder	Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Physicians
Physical Disabilities	Physicians, Specialists in a particular area such as Audiologists
Mental Disabilities	Psychiatrists, Psychologists, School Psychologists, Licensed Professional Counselors.

English as a second language, in the absence of a disability, is not an approved reason for accommodations.

(from *Ensuring Accommodations for GED Candidates with Disabilities*, GEDTS)
